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# MINIMUM WAGE BILL FOR FEDERAL EMPLOYEES

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## HEARINGS

BEFORE

## THE COMMITTEE ON LABOR

*H. S. Gandy* HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SIXTY-FIFTH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

ON

## H. R. 152

A BILL TO FIX COMPENSATION OF CERTAIN EMPLOYEES  
OF THE UNITED STATES

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FRIDAY, JANUARY 11, 1918



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COMMITTEE ON LABOR.

SIXTY-FIFTH CONGRESS.

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EDWARD KEATING, Colorado.  
EDWARD B. ALMON, Alabama.  
CARL C. VAN DYKE, Minnesota.  
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EDWARD E. BROWNE, Wisconsin.  
JOHN I. NOLAN, California.  
IRA G. HERSEY, Maine.  
FREDERICK N. ZIHLMAN, Maryland.

D. P. GERMERSHAUSEN, *Clerk*.

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MAR 29 1918

MINIMUM WAGE BILL FOR FEDERAL EMPLOYEES.

COMMITTEE ON LABOR,  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

Washington, D. C., Friday, January 11, 1918.

The committee this day met, Hon. James P. Maher (chairman) presiding.

The CHAIRMAN. There is a quorum here. The committee will now be in order. The bill before the committee is H. R. 152, introduced by Mr. Nolan.

(A copy of the bill is as follows:)

[H. R. 152, Sixty-fifth Congress, first session.]

A BILL To fix the compensation of certain employees of the United States.

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That after the beginning of the first fiscal year following the passage of this act the minimum compensation of any person employed by the United States or by the government of the District of Columbia shall be not less than \$3 per day; or if employed by the hour not less than 37½ cents per hour; or if employed by the month not less than \$90 per month; or if employed by the year not less than \$1,080 per annum: Provided, That persons employed on a monthly or annual salary basis and who regularly perform less than a full day's service shall receive compensation at the rate of not less than 37½ cents per hour: Provided further, That the provisions of this act shall not apply to persons enlisted in the military branches of the Government nor to persons receiving quarters and subsistence in addition to their compensation, nor to the employees in the Philippine Islands, Porto Rico, the Territory of Hawaii, the Territory of Alaska, and the Panama Canal Zone, nor to persons holding appointments as postmasters: Provided further, That the provisions of this act shall apply only to those persons who have been continuously in the employ of the Government of the United States or in the employ of the government of the District of Columbia for a period of not less than two years and who shall have attained the age of twenty years.*

SEC. 2. That upon the passage of this act the heads of departments in which are employed persons as defined in section one of this bill shall issue new appointments at the increased rate of compensation herein provided.

Mr. NOLAN. Mr. Chairman, I think it is due to you and the committee that I should make a little preliminary statement here. This bill, H. R. 152, is an exact copy of the bill that was reported by the Committee on Labor in the Sixty-fourth Congress. The number of that bill was H. R. 11876, entitled "A bill to fix the compensation of certain employees of the United States." The bill, as introduced in this Congress, is in the same shape as it was when the committee reported it out, with certain amendments. The amendments are included in the new bill.

Mr. WATSON. You mean the present bill is the same bill exactly as reported by the committee then?

Mr. NOLAN. Exactly as reported to the House by the committee. I understand that at the last meeting of the committee, in the early

part of December, it was decided to postpone any action on it until such time as the new members of the committee could familiarize themselves with the contents of the measure and also familiarize themselves with the hearings that were held at the last session. There were extensive hearings held on this bill, covering 423 pages. I presume that at this session we could go along for weeks or months hearing the stories of those underpaid and lower-paid employees of the Federal service that would fill several volumes. We all know what has happened in the last year regarding the prices of commodities and we all know that the people that have been hit the hardest are those that are receiving the lowest salaries, and there are a great many men and women here to-day, representing different organizations, and I presume they could go on and tell a story that would be rather heartrending and receive a great deal of publicity, etc., throughout the country, and could go on indefinitely, telling that story.

I think we all know it ourselves, and anybody that knows conditions, as we are expected to know them, knows that instead of things slackening up and prices becoming more reasonable, they have been going up by leaps and bounds, and if there was justification in the Sixty-fourth Congress for the committee unanimously to report this measure, I think there is ample justification in this Sixty-fifth Congress for the committee to report unanimously in favor of the bill.

There are a number of men and women here today representing organizations of Federal employees, and some of them are here as individuals and some of them representing the postal organizations, and I believe they want to say something, but as far as I am concerned, Mr. Chairman and gentlemen of this committee, I think that what we need now is speed, and I think what we ought to do at this session of Congress is to give first consideration to the employees of the Government of the United States that are receiving a small compensation, and I think this is a proper way to do it, to set a basis. I think you have surrounded this bill with enough restrictions, and personally, I am in favor of taking definite action so that we might have action in the House at the earliest opportunity.

Mr. ZIHLMAN. Mr. Chairman, I understood that the sentiment of this committee was almost unanimously in favor of this bill, and the matter was only laid over because of the absence of Mr. Nolan, and the fact that some of the new members of the committee wanted to familiarize themselves with the provisions of it. There have been extensive hearings on the bill and unless there is some information that some member of the committee wants to bring out some matter that is not clear to him I do not feel we should have any further hearings, and I move, unless there is objection, that we report the bill favorably.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Nolan very truly says that we can go ahead and continue hearings for some time on this bill and people would come from all over the United States to be heard, but I am in favor of expediting this legislation and getting some action on it in this Congress. If we allow it to hang fire another week or two the chances are we will find ourselves in the same position that we were in in the last Congress, with no action on the bill.

Mr. HERSEY. Is there anybody here in opposition to it, Mr. Chairman?



Mr. WATSON. Mr. Chairman, I suppose I was one of the last members of the committee at the last Congress to give my consent to sustaining this measure. My doubts on the subject arose from the fact that I had entertained the idea that Congress, as a body, was not so well qualified to speak on the question of wages, but the situation has materially altered since the last Congress was in session, and, as one of those who was last to give his consent, I feel that if anybody has any objection, perhaps I, myself, would have, but the objections which presented themselves to my mind have in a large measure been overcome and, Mr. Chairman, I move, sir, that the committee report the bill favorably and recommend its adoption.

Mr. BROWN. I wanted to ask just a question. I am in favor, I think, of this bill. I am in favor of the increase of wages right straight through of Government employees. The only question that I thought of was having a minimum wage of \$3 a day, whether it would not be quite an injustice between employees right down. There are some of them now that would not be affected, that are getting \$3 a day, that are performing much more expert service than those that would be raised, and I did not know but what some legislation might be worked out which would take all of these Government employees and graduate their wages and have them fixed in relation to each other some. They are now supposed to be fixed according to the service they perform, the expertness of their service. And another question that was asked several times, I know, when this bill was up before, and I do not know whether it has been answered or not, was just how much this bill would cost the Government a year. That has been asked, I know, a good many times and I would like to find out from Mr. Nolan whether that has been computed by anybody?

The CHAIRMAN. There has been a motion made by the gentleman and I would like to put the motion to the committee. The motion is that this bill be reported out favorably by the committee. Now, go ahead, Mr. Nolan.

Mr. NOLAN. I will state, Mr. Chairman, for the benefit of Mr. Brown, that I agree with him that there should be a reclassification of all salaries of the Government employees or due consideration given to the class of work employees are engaged upon, and also their skill. The unfortunate part of it is—not wanting to bring in the subject of another committee—but there is one committee in the House that is opposed to taking up the question of reforming the civil service, classification bills, and one thing and another, and as near as I can recollect in the nearly six years that I have been here—a little over five years; about five years—I can only remember about three hearings by that committee, and none on any classification bill.

My idea of this minimum wage is that it will be the basis for a reclassification measure. I think that any man or woman who has taken a civil-service examination or who is brought into the civil service of the United States that has served the Government two years and has reached the age of 20 years is entitled to \$3 a day. I think that the Government will receive better service; it will receive a better grade of workers by offering that inducement. It is not as

big an inducement to-day as it was a few years ago, and everybody seems to be favorable to the rate set—\$3 a day—and I think from that on they can begin to reclassify.

I understand, in talking to Mr. Sherley and Mr. Byrns, of the Appropriations Committee, that they have an investigation in mind for the purpose of reclassifying. In the meantime I think they are going to provide in the annual appropriation bill for some sort of a substantial temporary increase. Is that your understanding, Mr. Keating, in connection with that measure?

Mr. KEATING. Yes; they have given us encouragement along that line.

Mr. NOLAN. That is the situation as I gathered from the conversation which I had with them. That is their intention, although I think there will be a reclassification, and I think it is necessary that we should have one in the Federal service in justice to the employees.

Now, in reference to the question of cost of this bill, I will say that after the committee reported this bill out in the Sixty-fourth Congress I took up with all of the departments of the Government of the United States and the independent bureaus the question of the cost of this bill. I submitted a copy of the bill to them and got replies back from all hands. In fact the War Department suggested some modifications that the committee afterwards authorized me to put in, and that was that this bill should not apply to the employees in the Philippine Islands, Porto Rico, the Territory of Hawaii, the Territory of Alaska, and the Panama Canal Zone, for the reason that they had their own methods of payments, and it would probably run into millions of dollars. They are paid in silver in the Panama Canal Zone and paid at a certain rate in the Philippines and Porto Rico, etc. The nearest estimate that we could get was that it would be about \$23,500,000 at that time.

Since that time there has been a 10 per cent advance to those receiving less than \$1,200 per year. While I think there are some employees who have been brought into the Federal service since we reported this bill last time that would be benefited by the provisions of it, still I think the men and women brought into the Federal service in the last year or two that receive less than \$90 per month, or \$3 per day, are very few. The point is that the old employees of the Government are getting wages considerably lower for the same class of work to-day than those that are being brought in. In other words, inducements are held out, and must be held out, to people who come into the lower grades to-day to do certain service for the Government, in the matter of higher wages, and they are getting increased compensation over those that have been working 5, 10, or 15 years.

Mr. BROWN. I think that is so.

Mr. NOLAN. So that when it comes to the bringing in of people working in similar employments with those that will be benefited by this bill, the older employees, the newer employees are getting wages equal to those which are now being paid the older employees, except in, I suppose, probably a few hundred cases, so that the increased forces of the Government will not increase the amount necessary to put this bill into effect.

But even if it did, we know what has been going on. I do not know whether you gentlemen have had this called to your attention, but



here, for instance, is the District of Columbia, I cut out of the paper a short while ago, an advertisement of the Old Dutch Market, and I have got a kind of an idea that those people put this advertisement in in self-defense; that is, to show to the people of the District that they were compelled to charge increased prices for certain commodities on account of the way things are going. I am not going to attempt to read it here, but I want to call your attention to a few items, and then show you the aggregate figures. Flour, Gold Medal, that is a very high grade of flour, in December, 1914, was 4 cents; in December, 1915, it was 4 cents, that was a few months before we held the hearings; now it is  $6\frac{1}{2}$  cents. Condensed milk for the babies was 10 cents in 1914, 10 cents in 1915, and now it is 19 cents. Corn meal was 3 cents in 1914, 4 cents in 1915, and 6 cents in 1917. Oatmeal was 5 cents in 1914, 4 cents in 1915, and 8 cents in 1917. Beans—we have got the testimony of man after man and woman after woman, in these 423 pages of hearings that dwelt upon the fact, that beans had increased in cost considerably. Navy beans were 6 cents in 1914, 8 cents in 1915, and 18 cents in 1917. You can go down the line, and there is no use talking about meats, because they have gone up to a prohibitive figure; and I call attention to the fact that in all of these items—there were 61 items—the largest number of them are the kind of foods that the people receiving small wages would naturally have to subsist upon if they could buy them. There are a total of 61 items, and the total unit of cost in December, 1914, was 770; it increased in December, 1915, to 891, and it has increased in December, 1917, that is, a month ago, to 1,434. Now, the average increase in all of these items, shown on this list, from December, 1914, to December, 1917, was  $86\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. The average increase in all items shown on this list from December, 1915, to December, 1917, was  $61\frac{1}{10}$  per cent, the increase over 1914 being  $86\frac{5}{10}$  per cent.

The Government is making appropriations to the extent of millions of dollars. Of course, no matter what we spend, if there is no justification for the measure, I do not think there ought to be any consideration given to it; but, in spending all of these billions, I am sure that the matter of \$20,000,000—and that is what I figure it will be—is small, compared to the consideration we are giving to everything else, in the matter of increased prices. We have got to pay it to-day; we have got to pay it during this war; we have had to pay it for a long time past; we have had to pay increased prices for everything we bought, except the labor power of those that were working for us.

Now, you have always fixed the wages of these people according to law. Congress has taken away the power of the executive departments under the lump-sum appropriation to raise the salaries of the employees. The only way that underpaid employees could have their salaries raised in years gone by was by the lump-sum appropriation bills. In other words, the various executive departments and independent bureaus of the Government have been prohibited from meeting these increased prices that their people have had to pay by raising wages through the limitations that we have placed upon them. There is only one way that can be remedied, and that is by congressional action. I think all of our employees all over this country would be better off if they had the same opportunity as the men in

the mechanical departments have—as the men in the shipyards to-day working on Government work have—of meeting with their employer, which is the Government, or their representatives, and negotiating annually the question of wages; and if they can show that the prices of commodities have increased in the year there are certain allowances made. But where you have a fixed rate, and where you have these limitations on appropriation bills, the only remedy for these people is to come to Congress, and they have come to Congress, and the remedy is provided in this bill. That is a basic remedy, fixing a day's pay, and from that I think Congress will, through reclassification, do justice to all.

The CHAIRMAN. Before putting this motion I would like to have an understanding with the committee. There are a number of ladies and gentlemen here that came here, no doubt, to give evidence on this bill. I would suggest that they be permitted to submit whatever statements they have in writing and let it go in as a part of the minutes. We will not have time to hear them all. The committee is ready to vote. Are you ready for the motion?

Mr. NOLAN. I would suggest, Mr. Chairman, before you put the motion, that those people who are here representing organizations, and even those that are here as individuals, give their names to the clerk of the Committee on Labor, and, if they have any statements to make, that they hand them over to him so that they may be incorporated as a part of the hearings. I make that suggestion.

The CHAIRMAN. Is that the sense of the committee?

Mr. LONDON. It is so moved.

The CHAIRMAN. The question is that the committee report this bill out—

Mr. ALMON. Mr. Nolan, I will ask you, for information, Are there not a number of Government employees in the District of Columbia who only work probably from two to four hours per day, such as charwomen in the departments; and if so, do you think they should be paid \$90 per month, in accordance with the provisions of this measure?

Mr. NOLAN. No, we expected that that was taken care of, Judge, in the following language:

*Provided.* That persons employed on a monthly or annual salary basis and who regularly perform less than a full day's service shall receive compensation at a rate of not less than 37½ cents per hour.

The idea of that was that if a charwoman was employed at the rate of \$24 per month, different salaries per month, that was a committee amendment to the last bill, that persons employed on a monthly or annual salary basis, and who regularly performed less than a full day's service, shall receive compensation at the rate of not less than 37½ cents per hour. That would mean, for those working four hours per day, \$1.50 per day for the four-hour service.

Mr. ALMON. What are the charwomen in the House Office Building paid?

Mr. NOLAN. I think it is somewhere along about, anyway from \$20 to \$25 per month.

Mr. KEATING. I think it is from \$20 to \$25 per month.

Mr. NOLAN. I did see some of them and they told me something about that.

Mr. KEATING. This would provide an increase for them, but not any radical increase at that.

Mr. NOLAN. It would put them on the same hourly basis of every other employee, under the full terms of the bill.

Mr. ALMON. Take the Government work such as is being performed in munitions works and nitrate plants of the Government around over the country, and where private corporations, railroads, and other interests employ common labor at, say, \$2 or \$2.50 or \$2.25 per day, do you think it would be right for the Government to pay \$3 for the same service, right in the adjoining yards, in the same vicinity?

Mr. NOLAN. Well, I would say frankly, yes; Judge, I think it would be right, but I think that the instances where they can get common labor to-day—now, for instance, here is a bill that provides that a man shall be in the employment of the Government of the United States two years before he is entitled to the benefits of \$3 per day, and shall have reached the age of 20 years. That is to take care of the young man that comes in at the age of 16, who has got to wait until he reaches 20, and then the man who comes in the service at the age of 25 or 30, he would have to be in the service two years before he could get the benefit of the bill. I think the instances in this country, in the labor sections of the country where they can get common labor for \$2 and \$2.25 per day, are very rare. You spoke about munition plants. The munition workers of the country to-day are the highest paid workers, and the man who would go in and be of any value to them at all and stay two years would be paid \$4 or \$5 per day.

I think the statement made on the floor last Wednesday was a little bit overdrawn, and I asked the man about it afterwards, and he said that the common laborers in the coal mines of Pennsylvania were being paid \$5 per day and that the coal miners were making up to \$15 per day. I can not believe it, but if that is so, of course we are away under in this bill. That is an extraordinary situation, but if we want to discount that 40 per cent the common laborer around the mines would get \$3 a day. Wages have gone up tremendously. I recollect here a few weeks ago I sat with the Assistant Secretary of the Navy, Mr. Roosevelt, and a man who is now general manager of the Emergency Fleet Corporation, Mr. Piez, and several other men, and we were examining the wages of the men in the shipyards along the Pacific Coast, and there was not an instance where wages were as low as \$3 per day, and the helpers and laborers were being paid up to around \$3.96 for eight hours' work. The statement was made there that they would like to have the wages more uniform in the shipyards of the country, to make the conditions so attractive that men would come into them in preference to going into other employments, and they wanted to make them as attractive at the South Atlantic ports where they have established several shipbuilding districts, as they are on the Atlantic Coast and the Great Lakes. I think that while a few years ago a \$3 a day minimum might have been looked upon as high, to-day it is not looked upon as so extraordinary, and a man can not go very far on \$3 per day to-day and raise a family; he can not do it. It is a help to him but he can not do anything on \$3 a day and raise a family. He must have some

other money coming in. I do not think any place in the country is hit any harder than right here in this District.

Mr. ALMON. Do you remember what the janitors around these Government departments in Washington get paid as a rule, sitting around the doors, admitting guests, callers, etc.?

Mr. NOLAN. I do not know what their designation is; I think it is that of messengers, and I think their pay is somewhere in the neighborhood of \$55 or \$60 per month. Does anybody know what messengers get that are in the public buildings?

Mr. ZIHLMAN. \$60.

Mr. NOLAN. \$60, or \$720 per year. This would mean a raise of \$1 a day to them, Judge. The question has been spoken of. One of the leaders in the House spoke of that. It is not a question of correcting any evils of employment. I think that is a matter of administration. If they feel that a man or a woman is filling a position that is really unnecessary, it is up to the Government department to correct that matter. I think any man that is hired by the Government of the United States to-day ought to get at least \$3 per day if there were justification 20 years ago to give those salaries. I understand these salaries were fixed in 1854 and they have not been readjusted since. If there was justification then for \$60 a month there is justification to-day for \$90.

Mr. ALMON. Then, if there is a percentage of increase added to that, it would be——

Mr. NOLAN (interposing). I figured that before this thing would go through there would be something on that.

Mr. ALMON. Do you think that these janitors and messengers, sitting around these doors in the departments, six or eight hours per day, ought to be paid \$90 per month and then an additional percentage, if there is an additional percentage?

Mr. NOLAN. Well, I was not figuring on the percentage. I figured that before this measure became a law, the annual appropriation bills will have been put into effect and that if this measure passes, it will passpass after that 10 per cent, or whatever it is, 25 or 30 per cent, goes on. Last year we put on 10 per cent. That would give the \$60 a month man \$66.

Mr. ALMON. If he gets \$90 he would get \$100.

Mr. NOLAN. If he gets this additional money that would be the minimum.

Mr. ZIHLMAN. This bill would not affect it.

Mr. NOLAN. It would not affect it.

Mr. ALMON. The \$60 a month messenger, under the provisions of this bill, would get \$90 a month?

Mr. NOLAN. Yes.

Mr. ALMON. Then if there is 10 per cent added to that by Congress, he would get \$100 a month?

Mr. NOLAN. If this bill passess, unless we make some other provision.

Mr. ALMON. Then he would get \$100 a month?

Mr. NOLAN. No; that would be \$99, practically \$100, if an additional percentage of increase was scheduled, but if this is granted this year, the appropriation bills will pass before the 1st of July and will take effect then. This bill I do not think will pass the House and

Senate before the 1st of July. In that case the man who is now getting \$60 a month will receive probably an additional percentage between now and the 1st of July. On top of that percentage he would get the difference between that and \$90. For instance, we will say that the House gives a 25 or 30 per cent increase, under the provisions of Mr. Keating's bill. Then the \$60 a month man, who is getting \$60 a month now, would get 30 per cent additional, or \$18, which would be \$78. Then he would get \$12 additional advance, Judge, if my bill went into effect.

Mr. ALMON. Do you think that those messengers we have just spoken of, who are now getting \$60 a month, ought to be paid \$90 even if the same class of labor is being paid \$60 a month by outsiders in private business, department stores, apartment houses, and things like that?

Mr. NOLAN. I do not know that you will find anyone, unless it be boys, holding that sort of positions outside of the Government service. There has been a general complaint here, in fact it is not a complaint, it is a protest on the part of the department stores and office people and men in the city of Washington against the Government taking their help away and giving them higher pay. They are not paying them, as I said awhile ago, the same pay that they are paying the older employees whose salaries are fixed, but with the unlimited money and no limit on the money in these special appropriations that we have made they are able to pay that sort of labor now a good deal higher than those that are on the regular rolls. For instance, the Council of National Defense are not under the same restrictions as the Government ordinarily is. If they want messengers and they have got to pay \$80 a month, they will pay it to them, but the old employees get their old salaries.

Mr. ALMON. You do not think the railroad employees would be included under the provisions of this act since the railroads have been taken over and are controlled by the Government, do you?

Mr. NOLAN. I do not think there is anybody in the railroad shops that would benefit by it. I think they are getting that much and more now.

Mr. ALMON. I am sure most of them are.

Mr. NOLAN. I do not believe that any of them are getting as low as \$3 a day.

Mr. ALMON. You know there are a great many railroad men in the country who never have gotten anything like \$3 a day. They might have earned it, but they never have gotten it. There are section men in my part of the country who for years and years have been paid \$1.25 per day, which is not what they ought to be paid. I do not think they are getting more than \$2.25 per day now. I wondered if the provisions of this act would include the railroad employees, since the Government has taken over the railroads and is controlling them.

Mr. NOLAN. The Provost Marshal, Gen. Crowder, I understand from Mr. McLaurin, has decided they are not Government employees.

Mr. ALMON. I would not think so myself.

Mr. WATSON. As a legal proposition I would not think so.

Mr. ROBINSON. They would not come under the provisions of this act because they are not in the Government employ.

Mr. KEATING. If the Government takes them over I think the Government should increase the wages of section men and these telegraph operators and station agents.

Mr. WATSON. I think there are certain railroad employees, especially section men, whose wages should be increased.

Mr. ALMON. I simply asked the question for information.

Mr. NOLAN. I know, Judge.

Mr. BROWN. I would like to see in this report that is made, if we pass this bill, if it can be obtained, I would like to see the number of laborers who will be affected by this measure, as accurate an estimate as you can get, or the basis for your figures of \$33,000,000. I think you should work that out, and get those figures, because that question was asked before when it was on the floor, and I think we ought to have some pretty tangible basis there for answering that. People want to know how much money they are going to appropriate, and just what employees are affected, and what employees would be exempt. For instance, those charwomen there, those, of course, are working by the hour, but I myself am very ignorant about the employees in these different departments, and I do not know what they are getting, and I have no idea how many employees are in the different departments.

Mr. ROBINSON. Is it not a more equitable way to get at it, to pay them for the service received? Mr. Keating's bill provides for a certain percentage of increase in accordance with the high cost of living, and then makes a lump sum as a minimum. Is not that more equitable, to recognize the principle of pay for the service received?

Mr. KEATING. I think Mr. Nolan's view it that there is a minimum below which you can not go, and permit a human being to live as an American should live.

Mr. ROBINSON. Well, gentlemen, there are thousands of them in this country, not in the employ of this Government, receiving much less pay than \$3 per day—thousands of them.

Mr. NOLAN. That is true; and a few years ago there were thousands of men and women in different employments that were working 9, 10, 11, and 12 hours a day. The Government's establishment of the eight-hour day as a basis for a workday has had a tremendous moral influence on private employment. I think every shipyard in the country, even before we went into war, was on an eight-hour day basis, and a lot of industries were on an eight-hour basis and the activities in a legislative way were largely, I think, responsible for it. I think that a measure of this kind would correct and have a tendency to correct and have a good moral effect in leavening up the wages in private employment. I think the principle involved here ought to determine our action on this; and that is, whether we consider \$3 a day too high or whether, under present-day conditions, we ought not to say that \$3 a day is the least that we think a man or a woman can get along on in this country, and particularly so if they have to raise a family. Mr. Keating's bill is like the amendment put into last year's appropriation bill. It will go on from time to time until such time as a rule is brought in making it permanent legislation. There seems to be decided objection on the part of the Appropriations Committee to that. They are of the opinion, however, that there ought to be a reclassification. My opinion is that this is a good



foundation for reclassification, and then if they go to take care of some of the aches and ills and evils that there is some complaint about, you can do that in the reclassification measure.

Mr. ROBINSON. I do not know what experience you other gentlemen have had. My term of office here has been rather brief; my term commenced on the 4th of March last, but for every Government position that I in any way had the disposal of I had about 50 applications for every job, so these positions are not going begging.

Mr. CAMPBELL. That is perhaps due to the permanency of them rather than the compensation.

Mr. ROBINSON. Well, they are not permanent because with each change of administration those positions are changed; they are not permanent.

Mr. LONDON. But your constituents assume they will be permanent.

Mr. ROBINSON. I know they do not assume that, because changes in politics happen very often. We all recognize that.

Mr. NOLAN. Will you let me ask you this question, Mr. Robinson?

Mr. ALMON. Let Mr. Robinson finish his statement first.

Mr. ROBINSON. You fix the minimum pay at \$3 per day and say that we ought to recognize this as the minimum pay or wages in any branch of the service in the country and in private employment. Now, I was born and reared on the farm, and I dare say there is not a farmer raising cotton and corn in my section that could operate and get out even on paying his laborers \$3 a day to raise corn and cotton. Our country is not a rich country like the country that my friend Keating comes from, where they can make 100 bushels of corn to the acre without fertilizers.

Mr. KEATING. Two hundred bushels is the limit.

Mr. ROBINSON. We make 25 bushels per acre by using 1,000 pounds of fertilizer, and we think we are doing very well. I know farmers there who are working for \$25 per month, raising families, rearing families with 8 and 10 children, and living well. I do not mean by that that they have porterhouse steak for breakfast every morning, but then they raise what they eat.

The CHAIRMAN. What has been the percentage of increase in the pay of farm laborers in the past two years?

Mr. ROBINSON. All the farm laborers are trying to get in the Government because they are paid better.

The CHAIRMAN. What increase have they received for work on the farm?

Mr. ROBINSON. Oh, it has increased—I would say it has increased 30 per cent at least.

Mr. KEATING. Seriously, you can not get good farm labor in my section for less than \$3 a day.

Mr. HERSEY. It is the same in my country.

Mr. KEATING. And in my section of the country labor is cheaper, as a matter of fact, than in some other States.

Mr. ROBINSON. Well, I do not know; I have never visited your section.

Mr. NOLAN. Mr. Robinson, are those constituents of yours looking for civil-service jobs or just appointments?

Mr. ROBINSON. They are looking for any Government job.

Mr. NOLAN. Have you had a Government job to give out which was less than \$3 a day?

Mr. ROBINSON. Yes; the only patronage I have is a job in the folding room, and they paid them \$75 a month until that 10 per cent increase went into effect, and they are now getting \$82. I had about 25 applicants for the job, and the man who got it came to Washington, rented a house, and has a family of three children, and was glad to get the job.

Mr. NOLAN. You are getting him a raise of \$7.50 a month under this bill.

Mr. ROBINSON. I would be glad to have them raised, so far as I am personally concerned, but I am not in favor of spending the public money in this way when there are so many seeking jobs and getting less pay for more service in private employment. That is the way I feel about it, gentlemen, but I am a new man here and not up to the present-day methods of doing things.

Mr. NOLAN. I think, if it was necessary, we could bring down before this committee the officers of the Civil Service Commission. They will tell you that the applicants for positions at less than \$100 per month have fallen off tremendously ever since this war started, and they say there are thousands and thousands of men and women leaving the Government service to-day because they can do better on the outside.

Mr. ROBINSON. I would like to get some of those vacancies, for I have spent most of my time since I have been here running around trying to get some of my constituents a job.

Mr. NOLAN. Those are civil-service positions, and they are required to take the civil-service examination the same as anybody else.

Mr. ROBINSON. But when I go to the Civil Service Commission to inquire about them, they tell me there are so many ahead that they do not know when they will reach them.

Mr. LONDON. Assuming that you were a private employer, you would gladly pay a living wage, if you could afford it?

Mr. ROBINSON. I believe in paying for value received, gentlemen; but when you make a minimum price without any regard for service rendered, it looks to me like it is going rather far.

Mr. LONDON. But every human being, no matter how simple his service, is entitled to enough compensation to supply him with food, clothing, rent, and some allowance for recreation and the education of his children; is not that so?

Mr. ROBINSON. Yes.

Mr. LONDON. Now, if you will analyze those five elements that go to make up the budget of a family you will find that you can not make a living on less than \$3 a day; that \$3 a day is the least possible amount.

Mr. ROBINSON. Do you suppose that half the laborers in the United States to-day are receiving a minimum wage of \$3 per day?

Mr. LONDON. In private employment?

Mr. ROBINSON. In private employment.

Mr. LONDON. Well, if that be true, that would be the result of merciless competition, unscrupulous competition, between employers who have no soul and who are not animated by any noble motives, but who are competing with another at the expense of the helpless. The Government can not put itself in that position, can it?

Mr. ROBINSON. No; I do not think so, Mr. London.

Mr. LONDON. This is really the question, to my mind: Is \$3 a sufficient minimum for providing a man with food, clothing, rent, recreation, and the minimum of education?

Mr. CAMPBELL. Why not the maximum?

Mr. LONDON. Because even our Congressmen have not got it yet, so I can not ask it for the common masses. I meant no personal reflection, gentlemen. It was at my own expense.

Mr. CAMPBELL. We all understood that or we would not go so far.

Mr. BROWN. I would just like to ask Mr. Nolan a question. One of these young ladies tells me that in the Bureau of Engraving there would be 4,173 employees affected, women alone. Now, could not some statistics be compiled to go along with this report giving approximately in each department the number of employees affected, the number of women and the number of men, so that we could defend this bill? This bill will undoubtedly be attacked, and there will be some opposition to it, and we want to be prepared upon all of these points.

Mr. NOLAN. When this bill was first introduced in the Sixty-third Congress it was submitted to the various executive departments, and they submitted tabulations of the employees, cost, etc., and I put it in here in a condensed form and had it compiled in the hearings. From the last data that I got I had my secretary compile the number of men and women affected—that is, the number of employees affected and the probable cost, etc., from the information given us by all of the executive departments and independent bureaus of the Government. I have got that and intended to incorporate it in the hearings on this bill now.

Mr. BROWN. I think that we should put that into the report.

Mr. NOLAN. We can give the total in the report, but if I were to include it in the report it would take up almost as much space as that. [Indicating report of former hearings.]

Mr. BROWN. We can give the total in the report and state where it can be found in the hearings.

Mr. LONDON. Mr. Nolan, what class of employees are employed by the day, or for a period of less than a month?

Mr. NOLAN. Well, there are a great many here in the district. There are some working in the custodian service, and recently the per diem employees in the custodian service have been put on the monthly basis and their annual pay has been reduced \$11; that they suffered a reduction of \$11 per year on account of going on the annual basis, the Government taking the position that they were giving them something for it—that is, the Treasury Department—in the matter of 30 days' leave. Prior to that time those men worked 30 days in the month, and their wages were along from \$55 to \$75 a month. Some laborers, for instance, in the mechanical departments of the Government, the navy yards, arsenals, etc., are on a per diem basis. There are some men in the customs courts, I think, that are on a per diem basis. The report gave an idea of the number of per diem men in the different departments. For instance, in the War Department the per diem men were 8,436. This was in 1914. The per diem men in the Navy Department were 11,221; the per diem men in the Interior Department were 103. The rest of them were negligible so far as this report is concerned.

Mr. BROWN. On what page is that found?

Mr. NOLAN. The per diem men in the Government Printing Office were 1,638. This is on page 361.

Mr. BROWN. I would like to ask Mr. Nolan if this bill would affect these millionaires on the Council of National Defense, who are working for \$1 a year?

Mr. NOLAN. I do not know. Some people seem to think that if we gave them a little bit of a raise we might save some money. I have not gone into their conditions of life, etc.

Mr. BROWN. Most of them are staying at the Willard..

Mr. ALMON. Mr. Chairman, I am a friend of labor and always have been, and I am in favor of the laboring people of this country being paid a fair and reasonable wage, regardless of whether they are in the employment of the Government or in private employment. I am in favor of a substantial increase in the wages and salaries of the Government employees at this time on account of the very great increase in the cost of living. I stated before the subcommittee of the Post Office Committee of the House recently that I was in favor of a substantial increase of the salaries of post office clerks, rural carriers, and fourth class postmasters, and I trust that such an increase will be provided for by this Congress. I may support this bill when it comes before the House, but I reserve the right to support amendments to it and also to vote against it, for I am not at this time prepared to say that I am in favor of a minimum wage scale of \$3 per day for all of the employees of the Government.

While ordinarily that is a very low and reasonable wage, there may be in the employ of the Government those who do not earn, even under present wage scales in this country, \$3 per day, or \$90 per month, and for that reason I am not at this time prepared to give my approval to the bill as a whole; but I do want it distinctly understood that I am in favor of a reasonable wage scale and of a substantial increase at this time, especially during the war, on account of the very great increase in the cost of living, and I sympathize with the wage earners, especially of the Government, and especially those who are not receiving more than \$1,200 a year, for I realize that it is practically impossible for them to make a decent living and pay expenses on that amount, especially those who have families. That is all I care to say.

The CHAIRMAN. Does any other gentleman wish to speak on the motion?

Mr. ROBINSON. Mr. Chairman, I desire to state that I have not had the opportunity to give this matter the thought and study that I would prefer giving it before making up my mind definitely as to how to vote on this proposition, and one of the main reasons why I have not had that opportunity has been on account of the fact that I have been too busy with my constituents who want Government jobs. I have always been a friend of the laboring people and have gotten along very agreeably with all the laborers that I have ever had in my employ. In fact, I never had one who wanted to sever his services with me, as I always treated them squarely and honestly and tried to give them a living wage. I do not know but what, after full investigation of it, I might support this measure when it comes up in the House, but at the present time I would vote against a favorable report of this bill.

The CHAIRMAN. Does any other gentleman wish to speak on the motion?

Mr. CAMPBELL. Mr. Chairman, this bill provides that a man must be in the Government service two years before he can receive the benefits of it. Why is not an employee who is rendering the same service, after six months' employment, as much entitled to it as one who has been in the service for two years?

I think that a man who has a permanent position in the Government and who goes in under the civil service, and at the expiration of six months is performing the same service as the man who has been in there 2 years or 10 years, and who has the same obligations and is up against the same conditions of living as the other man, is just as much entitled to the increase, and I think it should be made six months.

Mr. NOLAN. I will say, Mr. Chairman, the original bill, of course, had no limitations. The amendment was incorporated by the committee during the time the bill was under consideration in the last Congress, it was a committee amendment, and in reintroducing the bill I introduced it in the form in which the committee reported upon it.

Mr. CAMPBELL. I think the two-year amendment should be cut out, and I will offer that as an amendment, that it be made six months.

Mr. NOLAN. To strike out two years and insert six months?

Mr. CAMPBELL. Yes. Will you accept it?

Mr. NOLAN. That is perfectly satisfactory to me, leaving in the age limit?

Mr. CAMPBELL. Yes; leaving in the age limit?

Mr. WATSON. How can you tell how people will be affected by it, unless you had some limitation of that sort on it? In estimating the cost of it to the Government you would be unable to estimate about what the increased expenditure would be unless you had a limitation of that character.

Mr. NOLAN. I understand the amendment provided for six months. I think we could ascertain it under those conditions.

Mr. WATSON. Well, now, there are a great many people employed by the Government at this time who are not under the civil service.

Mr. NOLAN. Of course, the six months' provision would shut out the man or woman who came in temporarily.

Mr. CAMPBELL. Well, I would be willing even to cut the six months' provision out, but there seemed to be a desire to have some limitation on it. I think if they render the service that the man who has only been working one day is entitled to the same compensation as the man who has been working a year.

Mr. BROWN. Is not a man worth considerably more in any employment after he has worked a year, taking the average? Of course, there are exceptions, but you can not make a rule on exceptions. In the ordinary case, is not the man who has worked a year worth a good deal more to you in most any service?

Mr. CAMPBELL. This is the idea. The laboring man who goes in and uses a pick and shovel in the streets of Washington, in one day he is able to do that just as well as the man who has been doing it six months or a year.

Mr. BROWN. Of course this affects, right here, 4,173 women alone in the Bureau of Engraving. Now, that work is not common, ordinary work. If you go in there you will find that it is very expert work.

Mr. CAMPBELL. But they are not paying expert wages for it.

Mr. BROWN. I know they are not, and that is what we want them to do. They ought to pay it. I think you would weaken your bill if you put it down to six months. It might be a year, but I think the more you put that down the more you will weaken your bill.

Mr. CAMPBELL. The idea here is to take care of the increased cost of living, and the man who goes in now and gets a position is up against exactly the same conditions as the man who has worked two years. We are not making up salaries for the men who have worked two years, but we want it to apply to any man.

Mr. BROWN. A man who has been working for the Government 2 years, or maybe 20 years, came there under entirely different conditions, made his contract under different conditions, when the cost of living was not half as high as it is now. I have not near as much sympathy for the person who goes into the Government employment now, and knows what he is going to get there, knows the cost of living, especially in Washington, knows all those things, and still he wants the job, as I have for the employees who have worked faithfully for the Government for years and years, under entirely different conditions, when they were able to support themselves for half what they do now. Those are the people that appeal to me more than any others.

Mr. CAMPBELL. They likewise appeal to me, but here the Government needs this service performed, and they have got to have it done.

Mr. BROWN. As a matter of fact, the Government in these new jobs that are being created, as Mr. Nolan says, is paying higher wages, a good deal higher. This wage matter has not been revised for 25, 30, or 40 years.

Mr. CAMPBELL. As an instance, I know a man in the Pittsburgh post office who has been working there for 17 years who is getting \$900 a year now, and the people who have gone in recently are getting \$990 a year.

Mr. BROWN. I would be in favor of increasing the wages of Government employees, but I have employed some labor, and I feel that anyone who has worked for me a year is worth more each year, and if they are not I ought to dismiss them and get some one else, and I think a man who is working for you continuously ought to have his wages increased right along.

Mr. CAMPBELL. Mr. Nolan, as I understand, the purpose of your bill is to increase the wages of the employees so that they can get a decent living, so that they can live in accordance with American principles and ideals? Is that your idea?

Mr. NOLAN. Yes.

Mr. CAMPBELL. Therefore you include everybody?

Mr. NOLAN. As I say, Mr. Campbell, a good deal of discussion took place on that feature of the bill the last time as to putting that limitation on it. The original bill did not carry it.

Mr. ZIHLMAN. Was not that provision put in as a sort of protection to the Government to prevent a man changing from one department to another, from quitting one department and going in another?



Would not this bill, as drawn, be an encouragement to the Government employee to stay in the department where he obtained his employment and continue there until he gets the increase? This provision, as I see it, is largely a measure of protection to the Government.

Mr. CAMPBELL. That is not the purpose of the bill, according to Mr. Nolan's statement, which is to increase the standard of wages according to what is right and proper.

Mr. NOLAN. Of course, there were several reasons for it. There is the age limitation there, and the one of two years.

Mr. CAMPBELL. That is all right; that is proper.

Mr. NOLAN. That was for the purpose of prohibiting employees who might be just 18 years of age from going into the service and receiving the benefits of this bill. The committee took the position that two years ought to elapse before he would be entitled to the full benefits of it. The bill does not prohibit them from immediately paying \$3 a day to the man that goes to work, but it does say that after two years they must get that. I think that is a thing that will fairly well take care of itself.

Mr. LONDON. Mr. Chairman, what is the parliamentary status of the bill just now?

The CHAIRMAN. There is a motion pending to report the bill.

Mr. LONDON. I ask that the motion be put. It is nearly 12 o'clock, and we ought to adjourn.

The CHAIRMAN. Is there any objection? All in favor of reporting the bill will say "aye"; contraminded, "no."

(The motion was agreed to.)

**STATEMENT OF MR. WILLIAM F. GIBBONS, SECRETARY UNITED NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF POST OFFICE CLERKS OF THE UNITED STATES, WASHINGTON, D. C.**

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee on Labor, in my capacity as national secretary of the United National Association of Post Office Clerks of the United States, representing a membership of approximately 27,000 post-office clerks employed in the first and second class post offices of the country, I am here to advocate a favorable report by your committee of the bill now before you for consideration, better known as the Nolan minimum-wage bill, H. R. 152.

I believe that this bill ought to receive your early and favorable consideration. Its adoption by Congress will result in great good to the service and do justice to a large army of faithful and efficient employees who have been overlooked for years.

The December and January reports of the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the Department of Labor, printed in the Monthly Review, does not show any decrease in the high cost of living. The January report states that food as a whole was 48 per cent higher on November 15, 1917, than on November 15, 1913. During this four-year period corn meal advanced 127 per cent; flour, 109 per cent; lard, 104 per cent; bacon, 77 per cent; sugar, 75 per cent; and potatoes, 72 per cent. No article declined in price.

A recent dietary study made by the Bureau of Labor Statistics in conjunction with the Department of Agriculture shows that 30 cents

per day is the least sum upon which an adule male could be properly fed at the prices now prevailing.

According to an investigation made by the New York Association for Improving the Conditions of the Poor a family of five should have an income of about \$1,000 to maintain a normal standard of living in the Borough of Manhattan. This statement of the New York Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor was only made after its experience in caring for 27 families in the hospital in the Vanderbilt tenements.

According to the report of the investigation made, "The average living expenses per family of five individuals for 233.37 days, the average residence in the hospital during the year, was \$548.33, making a daily expense per family of \$2.499, or \$912.50 a year. As these figures are exclusive of the cost of administration and supervision and as the living afforded had not the semblance of luxury, the association believes they furnish a fair basis for computing the cost of maintaining a decent home and providing a comfortable living for an average family of five persons—father, mother, and three children under 14."

As this bill practically rewards faithful and efficient service, I trust the committee will favorably report it to the House for early enactment into law.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Nolan, will you make the report on the bill?

Mr. NOLAN. If it is agreeable to the committee. Mr. Chairman, I will be glad to do so.

#### STATEMENT OF MR. F. H. AINSWORTH, PRESIDENT OF THE FEDERAL EMPLOYEES' UNION OF SAN FRANCISCO.

Mr. Chairman and gentlemen of the committee, I represent the Federal Employees' Union of San Francisco, which was the first organization to form, composed of miscellaneous Government employees, after the passage of the act of August, 1912, giving legislative sanction to the petitioning of Congress by the civil employees of the Government, either individually or collectively.

Inasmuch as I am now engaged in the military branch of the Government, I shall not attempt to present any arguments at this time, leaving that phase of it to Mr. McLarin, the national president of the Federal Employees' Federation, and the others who are here to testify to-day.

Upon the formation of the San Francisco organization an investigation was made of those matters which were of interest to the majority, and after considerable time and inquiry it appeared that the most pressing grievance by which a large number were affected was the low rate of pay which prevailed in many of the Government departments. The organization having in mind the inequalities of compensation to the Government employees, and becoming more familiar with the varying methods by which this compensation was fixed, resolved to start at the bottom, and to urge as a foundation for all other salaries that the lowest paid employee should receive an amount which would enable him to live and support a family at least decently. This, it was determined, could not be accomplished on less than \$3 a day; and having adopted that resolution, it was

put in the shape of a bill, which Mr. Nolan introduced and which has since become well known to Congress as the Nolan \$3 minimum wage bill.

Perhaps I should say here that this does not represent minimum-wage legislation as legislation per se but represents an effort on the part of employees to have a wage scale and agreement established by their employer, the Government of the United States.

During the last session of Congress exhaustive hearings were held on this measure and, among other things, it developed that over 105,000 of the then 450,000 employees were receiving less than \$3 a day or that rate. Since then it is not necessary to go into details concerning the enormous increase in the cost of living. Suffice it to say that the lower paid employees are now on the verge of despair owing to the meager compensation which they receive and the enormous price which they have to pay for the bare necessities of life.

There has been much discussion, and is now, of compensation legislation, retirement legislation, reclassification, and various other measures for the benefit of the Government worker, but the organization which I represent takes the ground that before any of those proposals can be practically enacted into law, some uniform starting point must be found and used as a basis to which all salaries would relate in proportion to the value of the service rendered over that of the minimum. If I may use a homely illustration, the present situation is so irregular, uneven, and distorted that it might be likened to a structure which was built on rough and hilly ground and in which no effort was made to obtain a level foundation, but the foundation of the structure was laid on top of the ground and all the inequalities and uneven characters should be carried throughout the building. The position of the San Francisco organization is that the Government worker performs a necessary legislative function and that his salary should not be exclusively regulated by the law of supply and demand for labor, but that when he gives his full time he should receive at least enough compensation, so that he and his children should not have to depend upon charitable contributions or other sources of income for an existence. It has been stated that in Chicago many of the custodian force, especially the women, have to work in other places when not employed by the Government, so that the Government is the loser, because it does not receive the result of a fresh and vigorous employee but rather the effort of one who is fatigued in another occupation and then fills in on Government time.

The custodian service is conspicuously one of the lowest-paid classes of employment in the United States either in private or public life, and we have been recently astounded to learn that notwithstanding the increased cost of living which has gone ahead by leaps and bounds during the past two years, that that service has actually reduced the pay of some of its employees. If I may do so, I will cite the situation of the custodian employees who are firemen. Formerly, these men received \$2.25 a day, and by working 365 days in the year they could earn \$822.50. In some cases at least they were given 15 days' leave each year. Now, their pay has been reduced from \$822.50 to \$810, and they have been put on a per annum basis which, however gratifying it may be to know that they have that status, the reduced

day of \$12 a year is more of a penalty than they feel they should be called upon to bear. In a communication on this point, dated December 20, 1917, Mr. J. H. Moyle, Assistant Secretary of the Treasury, states: "Per annum employees are required to render on Sundays and legal holidays only such services as are absolutely necessary and may be allowed 30 days' sick leave in a calendar year; while per diem employees must serve at least eight hours on Sundays and holidays or deduction is made from their pay and all absences of such employees on account of sickness are considered without pay." In other words, the Treasury Department advances the statement that these underpaid per diem men may not be paid on any day except they work, and they are entitled to neither sick leave nor annual leave. Therefore, by putting them on a per annum basis and practically assuring them 30 days' annual leave it improves their condition somewhat. This offers an opportunity to contrast the condition of these poorly paid per diem men of the Treasury Department and other highly paid per diem men who receive \$4, \$5, \$6, and in some cases, higher per diem salaries, who are not required to work on Sundays or on legal holidays, but who receive full pay for those days they do not work, and, beside, receive 30 days' sick leave and 30 days annual leave under normal conditions. Here we see in the very Treasury Department itself, one regulation and schedule of pay for one class of per diem employees, the poorest paid and the poorest protected, while another class of per diem employees, who are better paid, more intelligent, and better able to protect themselves, receive entirely different treatment.

Is not this ample and impressive evidence of the necessity of some fundamental legislation insuring to all like treatment? It has been very gratifying to the organization I represent to note that many of the departments, on their own motion, have given very substantial increases of pay, especially to the lower-paid employees. This is notably so in the Navy Department, War Department, Department of Labor, and elsewhere, all of which is impressive evidence that the minimum sought by this bill is entirely meritorious.

In my reference to the custodian service and its inadequate pay, I should mention that Assistant Secretary Moyle, in his letter of December 20, apparently seeking to convey to the custodian employees some comfort, states that House bill 344 is now in the Committee of the Whole and if enacted into law will materially increase the pay of custodian employees. While I would like to see them have their pay raised—because in my somewhat wide experience among Government employees they are the most deserving of it at the present time—I am reluctant to indorse a proposal whereby one group has their pay increased and another group, who may be equally worthy, are not considered. I do not mean by that that I do not want to indorse H. R. 344, but what I do mean is that this is only a repetition of the irregular practice which has led to the complaint that is now being made. One bureau or one department will get legislation to advance its own employees and another department or another bureau will receive none. Take, for example, the case of stenographers. The pay for years has been so low that many competent stenographers have declined Government employment. Some departments of the Government have paid more than others, and those that paid the

highest were better served; but recently, because of the increased demands, the Government has, in some cases, increased the initial pay for stenographers, and, as a result, there are now stenographers in the Government service who have been there a number of years who receive less pay than newcomers. It would seem to our organization that the Government should establish for stenographers a uniform entrance salary to cover all the departments and independent offices in the entire United States. When a stenographer should be needed for any particular branch he or she could be taken from that list, and the entrance salary should be fixed at some amount which would have a reasonable relation to the minimum pay of a Government employee of \$3 a day. In other words, if it shall be decided that the minimum wage of the lowest character of labor, such as common labor, shall be \$3 a day, then the degree of skill, education, and responsibility necessary to produce an efficient stenographer should be graded proportionately above that \$3 a day. I may venture the opinion, from my own observation, that if the Government would offer an entrance salary of \$1,200 a year for stenographers it would receive a very substantial service and attract a very substantial class of men and women, having in mind, of course, that future promotion would depend upon the efficiency and reliability of the individual, based upon a properly kept efficiency report.

Again returning to the custodian employees, because their situation is so aggravated that it recurs to my mind in many ways, I want to ask you gentlemen to consider for a moment the frame of mind of a woman or a man in this service living in a city like the one I reside in—San Francisco. There we have two magnificent public buildings, one a customhouse and the other a post office. Both of them are monuments testifying to the skill and art of the architects who designed them. In the customhouse they have magnificent bronze doors which are said to cost \$8,000 each. These doors are guarded by artistic bronze lamps which, it is said, cost \$1,000 apiece: so that the custodian employee when he goes to work passes between the lamps and through the doors into a marble palace. And when his day's work is over he goes to a palatial marble lavatory costing not less than \$2,000 and washes his hands in a \$500 marble basin with nickel and bronze ornaments of artistic design. Yet, when he goes home he finds he has not enough coal in the cellar nor food in the pantry to supply the needs of his children notwithstanding the luxurious and magnificent daily surroundings during his working hours. It is reported that in a public building in Detroit the custodian was unable to get the windows washed for a period of three months because in that city the window washers had an organization and received from \$3.50 to \$4 a day for window washing, and when any of the custodian employees was told he had to wash windows he replied, "If I got to wash windows I will join the window washers' union and receive \$3.50 or \$4 and not \$60 a month," and so in desperation in order to get the windows finally washed the custodian resorted to the subterfuge of hiring a new man and giving him that task as his first before he became "wise," as it were, to the general situation.

In behalf of the organization I represent I wish to express its sincere appreciation of the attention given by the Committee of Labor in dealing with this question, because not until this bill was referred to

this committee was any attention paid to it, but in the last Congress, when a subcommittee of your honorable body held hearings, illuminous testimony was submitted showing the distressing conditions of the Government employees, especially the lower paid, and their need for immediate relief. It is our belief that if your committee will report this bill out, if it can be brought to a vote on the floor of the House, that few Members will care to go on record as saying that \$3 a day is too much for the least important of those who serve the Government.

I thank you, gentlemen, for your attention and this opportunity to place our views in the record.

(Whereupon the committee adjourned.)

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INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF MACHINISTS.

*Washington, D. C., January 11, 1918.*

To the COMMITTEE ON LABOR.

*House of Representatives, Washington, D. C.*

GENTLEMEN: On behalf of the toolmakers, machinists, machinists' helpers, and others employed in the Government service, whom I have been authorized to represent on matters of legislation pending before Congress, I desire to urge upon your committee the speedy report and passage of H. R. 152, generally known as "the Nolan minimum-wage bill," which you are now having under consideration.

The establishment of a minimum wage below which no head of a family or potential head of a family shall work has long been advocated by our association.

We believe that the American standard of living should not be set in accordance with what impoverished men and women in dire need of subsistence can be forced to accept at the factory gate, but that Congress and other law-making bodies should determine what that standard should be and that it should be high enough to enable a workman to properly feed, clothe, shelter, and educate his family, and, in addition thereto, to provide them with a reasonable amount of recreation and amusement. In our opinion government is instituted among men for the purpose of establishing justice and protecting the weak against the unreasonable exactions of the strong and powerful, and not merely for the purpose of so setting the rules of the game of life that each individual shall be able to obtain such a share of the things of this world as he can without actually resorting to physical force.

When the Nolan bill was first introduced it provided, among other things, a minimum wage of \$3 per day, but since that time the cost of living has advanced over 25 per cent, so that if \$3 was the least upon which a family should be required to exist at that time it surely should be at least that now.

We believe, however, that this minimum wage should be absolute for the class of positions covered and that it should not be contingent upon a workman having been employed for two years. This provision would eliminate a large portion of the employees who would otherwise be affected from its provisions and it would be possible to evade the provisions of this measure by frequent interruptions in the service of low-paid employees. It is therefore suggested that in lines 6 to 9, on page 2, the following language be struck from the bill: "who have been continuously in the employ of the Government of the United States or in the employ of the government of the District of Columbia for a period of not less than two years, and."

While this bill, if passed, will affect very few machinists, it will affect a large number of machinists' helpers and similar classes of workmen in the navy yards and arsenals under the jurisdiction of the Navy Department and War Department, respectively. In the navy yard service, for instance, the highest pay for machinists' helpers is \$2.96 per day and the lowest maximum in any one yard for machinists' helpers is \$2.64. The pay for common laborers at the navy yards runs as low as \$2.08; teamsters, \$2.16; stable keepers, \$2.24; janitors, \$2; hodcarriers, \$2.48. In the arsenal service the pay appears to be about the same for this class of labor.



We believe that your committee will be doing a great public service by having this law placed upon the statutes, not only for employees in the service of the Government but for those in private employ.

We can not hope to obtain high American standards of citizenship unless we see to it as a people that our ideals of that standard are lived up to. Regardless of how simple and insignificant a man's or a woman's work may seem, if it is necessary work or work which the Government desires to have done, it is worth a living wage, whether that work be that of a messenger who does nothing but sit at a door of one of the departments to receive visitors or pick leaves off the Capital Grounds. If any given work is not sufficiently important to deserve a living wage on the part of the one who does it, it should be abandoned.

Very respectfully submitted,

M. P. ALIFAS,

*President District No. 44, International Association of Machinists.*

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NATIONAL FEDERATION OF POSTAL EMPLOYEES,  
*Washington, D. C., January 15, 1918.*

Hon. JAMES P. MARR,  
*Chairman of Labor Committee, Washington, D. C.*

DEAR SIR: I am inclosing a statement to be incorporated in the hearings on the Nolan \$3 minimum wage bill.

Very truly, yours,

[SEAL.]

GILBERT E. HYATT, *President.*

STATEMENT OF GILBERT E. HYATT, PRESIDENT NATIONAL FEDERATION OF POSTAL EMPLOYEES.

Evidence has become hackneyed by repetition that a large portion of our people were not only denied all the brightness of life but suffer from lack of its necessities. It would appear to be the most obvious duty of the Government to see that none of this pitifully exploited class were in the ranks of its own employees.

The often repeated statement that the Government was justified in maintaining certain standards because these standards might be found to prevail in some helpless and unorganized industries is simply to say that the Nation should place its sanction on all the far-reaching evils that follow in the train of an inadequate wage scale. Two wrongs do not make a right, even when a government is guilty of one of these wrongs. Another argument sometimes heard is that because applicants to these positions are numerous, no raise in pay is necessary. Laying aside the heartlessness of this argument, it is a significant fact that such statements generally emanate from rural districts, where the cost of living and the wage scale are lower than in the big centers of population. The fact that applicants, coming to these centers under the delusion of the desirability of these jobs, are quickly disillusioned proves that the standard of pay in Government employ is too low. Even this argument seems to have disappeared. As one angle of the situation, post-office clerks in some offices have complained of the insanitary condition of these offices and been told that it could not be improved, as men would not enter the custodian service for the pay allowed. The falling off of applicants and of applicants who accept appointment for the postal service is proof of the fact that men can not afford to work for the salary in the lower grades, even with the prospect of a permanent position and later promotion in salary. Thus the Government, which must largely train its own skilled workers, has cut itself off from the source of its own labor supply.

Among the lower-paid Government employees debts that constantly increase and can not be met, resort to loan sharks, lowered standards of living are the common stories. Attempts to eke out a scanty wage by extra work are so common that these workers have earned a place in the service vocabulary, in that they are called "sundowners" or "twilight workers."

A recent investigation of the question of a living wage developed the testimony that \$1,433 a year was the minimum on which a family could be decently supported. In view of this fact, the minimum contemplated by this bill is moderate.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR,  
FEDERAL LABOR UNION No. 12776,  
BUREAU OF ENGRAVING AND PRINTING.

TO THE COMMITTEE CONSIDERING H. R. 152:

The women employees of the Bureau of Engraving and Printing are desirous of bringing to your attention the following statements:

In this bureau there are employed the following women at rates per diem as shown:

	Per- manent.	Tem- porary.		Per- manent.	Tem- porary.
\$1.60.....	18		\$2.24.....	1,392	85
\$1.75.....	1,750	202	\$2.31.....	31	25
\$1.92.....	130		\$2.50.....	84	1
\$2.00.....	267	25			

A large percentage of these women have dependents, and the increase in the cost of living is a serious problem which the passage of the Nolan bill would help solve.

It is not necessary to go into a discussion of the increased cost of living; everyone feels it. But, aside from that fact, the wages of the women employees of the bureau are not commensurate with the work performed. Their duties involve special training, responsibility, and integrity, and a great amount of physical endurance. No general increase has been granted since July 1, 1902. Many skilled employees have resigned to enter better-paid branches of the Government or outside concerns, thereby hampering the work and output of the bureau.

We heartily indorse the Nolan minimum-wage bill and urge upon this committee the necessity for a favorable and early report.

Respectfully submitted.

GERTRUDE M. McNALLY.  
MARY E. GANZHORN.  
NORA B. JAMES.  
LULA V. HARRIS.  
BEATRICE ALLPRESS.  
ISABEL E. MELLEEN.  
CATHERINE I. MYERS.

#### SOME FACTS ABOUT THE HIGH COST OF LIVING.

In Washington during the past six years every article of food has doubled in price, and some things are three times as high as they were six years ago.

First, corn meal six years ago was 2 cents per pound. To-day it is 7 cents per pound.

Flour six years ago was 3 cents per pound. To-day it is 8 and 9 cents per pound.

Yeast powder six years ago was 15 cents per pound. To-day it is 25 cents per pound.

Salt six years ago was 3 cents per pound. To-day it is 10 cents per pound.

Oatmeal six years ago was 5 and 7 cents per box. To-day it is 10 and 15 cents per box.

All kinds of meats are three times as high as they were six years ago:

Western fatback was 5 and 6 cents per pound. To-day it is 30 and 33 cents per pound.

Pork chops were 10, 12, and 14 cents per pound. To-day they are 38 and 42 cents per pound.

Lard was 10 cents per pound. To-day it is 30 and 35 cents per pound.

Butter was 20 and 25 cents per pound. To-day it is 52 and 60 cents per pound.

Eggs were 15, 20, and 25 cents per dozen. To-day they are 50 and 75 cents per dozen.

Canned goods of all kinds have also greatly increased in price. Tomatoes, peas, and corn have doubled in price.

The advance in the cost of clothing is just as great.

A suit of clothes that cost \$12 a few years ago now costs \$22.

A hat that cost \$1.50 a few years ago now costs \$3.

Shirts that were \$0.50, \$0.75, and \$1 some time ago to-day cost from \$1 to \$2.50, and I wish to state that the material in these garments is very inferior.

The advance in the price of leather has almost put shoes out of the poor man's reach.

A few years ago \$2.50 and \$3 would purchase a good pair of shoes; to-day the same shoes cost \$5, \$7, and \$9 per pair.

Coal, the way we laborers buy it, costs us \$12.75 per ton, at \$0.45 per bushel.

Wood costs from \$12 to \$14 per cord, and yet, Mr. Chairman, we laborers have not had an increase of wages for 50 years.

All other class of workers—that is, the higher-paid man—have had several increases within the past 50 years, but for some reason the laborer has had no consideration.

Mr. Chairman, we are expected to be good-natured, smiling, and obliging in carrying on our work, and, gentlemen, a man who is half fed and clothed can not meet these requirements. I personally know men who, because of their low salaries, seldom leave the building on pay days until every cent he has drawn has been paid out for debts.

The Public Printer promised to recommend to Congress in his annual report a substantial increase for laborers in the Government Printing Office, but we find that he did not do so. He said to our committee on November 1 that our wages could not be changed except by an act of Congress.

Gentlemen, there are some laborers employed at the Bureau of Engraving and Printing who are paid as low as \$1.45 per day, and I desire to call your attention to the fact that they receive no more for night or Sunday work. There are three classes of wages paid on the yard, viz, \$2, \$2.11, and \$2.24 per day, and yet each and every man is doing the same kind of work.

I hope, gentlemen, that you will see your way clear to correct this rank injustice to these men. We hope that Congress will set a standard scale of wages for all laborers employed by the United States Government.

Respectfully submitted by Local No. 71.

R. TAYLOR, *President.*

#### WASHINGTON NAVY YARD HELPERS' LOCAL UNION, No. 14915.

*Washington, D. C., January 10, 1918.*

MR. CHAIRMAN: The following is a true statement of the conditions which confront the men employed as helpers in the Washington Navy Yard in regard to the high cost of living. The following is an exact account of the conditions which exist in my own home:

House rent-----	\$16. 00
Gas bill -----	2. 50
Coal, a ton-----	10. 50
Insurance-----	4. 00
Groceries for family of five-----	50. 00
One pair of shoes a month for my children-----	7. 50
	<hr/>
	90. 50

You will notice that the above does not include clothes for myself and family; also there is nothing for the doctor, car fare, pleasure, or tobacco, if used.

In order for the helper to get clothes for himself and family it becomes necessary for him to buy his clothes on credit and pay a great deal more for them than they are really worth. But what is he to do? He must have clothes for himself and family. Well, he gets the clothes with the understanding that he will pay so much every pay day; but when pay day comes around he finds out that he can not meet the payment; he tries to make an excuse to the credit man, but he is told that if he does not meet his payments more promptly that he will write a letter to the officials of yard. The rules of the department say that you must pay your honest debts or you will be discharged.

Now, gentlemen, is this not a great condition for a man to have to meet who is trying hard to raise a family in a decent, respectable manner?

Now, gentlemen, you are told that you must pay these bills, and where in the name of the good Lord are you going to get the money when we are not being paid a living wage which to live on?

As I have stated, my expenses for one month is \$90.50 and my pay is \$82.16. If sickness overtakes me or my family, why I am compelled to go in debt, and there is no way for me to ever get straight again. Nearly every necessary of life has increased double in the past two years, but our wages have not moved very fast in that time.

Now, gentlemen, there is one more thing that I would like to call your attention to, and that is this: Nearly 80 per cent of the men for whom I am speaking are men who gave their country their services when needed. In the War with Spain we willingly gave up our work and our chance to learn a trade to fight for our country, therefore we feel that in return we should be given at least a living wage. We served our country then and are serving it now, but we are made sick trying to figure out how we are going to keep our little homes together until you gentlemen come to our assistance.

We do not think that it is necessary for us to go into details in regards to the prices of the different articles of food, because we feel that you gentlemen already know that. Let us hope that when the bill introduced by the Hon. John Nolan comes before you gentlemen that it will meet with your speedy approval. We are only asking for something that is fair and just and something that we believe belongs to every true American, and that is a living wage and God grant that we may get it.

Very respectfully,

A. BRIDGES,  
*Corresponding Secretary.*

STATEMENT OF THOMAS F. FLAHERTY, SECRETARY-TREASURER OF THE NATIONAL  
FEDERATION OF POSTAL EMPLOYEES.

The organization that I have the honor to represent gave its emphatic indorsement to the Nolan bill at its last biennial convention, held in Memphis, Tenn., September 3-6, 1917. In my report to that convention I made this statement in reference to the Nolan bill:

"One of the most far-reaching of all Government employees' wage measures is the Nolan minimum wage bill, which seeks to establish a minimum wage of \$3 a day for all Government employees, except postmasters, who have been in the employment of the Government for two years and are 20 years of age. While fortunately the majority of postal workers receive more than the \$1,080 yearly minimum by the Nolan bill, it nevertheless indirectly affects every postal employee. The existence of a large army of poorly paid Government employees is a constant menace to those better paid and tends to lower the entire wage scale. In seeking the enactment of the Nolan bill, therefore, we are not only helping those relatively worse off to reach a higher standard but we are fixing our own standards a little more secure and bettering our chances for a higher classification.

"On March 21, 1916, I testified before a subcommittee of the Labor Committee in behalf of the Nolan bill and utilized the opportunity to expose the grievances of the substitute clerks, carriers, and railway-mail clerks; the inadequacy of the present postal wage scale; the misuse of the stop watch; the tendency to speed up the men; the demotion of collectors and other service complaints. This testimony was printed and distributed as a public document to interested service workers.

"The Nolan bill was favorably reported to the House, but died on the calendar. It has been reintroduced in the Sixty-fifth Congress. I recommend that the convention indorse the Nolan bill and instruct the legislative representative to work for its enactment."

The Nolan bill would do two big things for the Postal Service and postal employees. It would increase the entrance wage more than 30 per cent—from \$800 to \$1,080—and it would operate to limit the period of substitution to two years. In view of the fact that substitutes in the Postal Service must work on an average of four years at a wage of \$420 per year, one can readily see the necessity of doing just what the Nolan bill proposes, namely, shorten the period of substitution and raise the entrance wage to insure to the service a steady influx of capable, alert, high-grade young men, the type so necessary to an efficient service.

In my testimony before this committee on March 21, 1916, found on page 107 of the printed hearings, I dwelt at some length on the various phases of the postal employees' work and I shall not again go into the subject in detail.

Suffice to say that the same arguments then used are applicable to-day with even greater force.

News clippings herewith submitted are typical. One from the Los Angeles Record states that between 500 and 600 men have resigned from the Postal Service in four Western States because of the inadequate wage, and the entire substitute force at Seattle quit in a body. Another is from the Toledo News Bee, and is a condemnation of the department's method of getting school children to step into the places vacated by men who have quit for more attractive employment elsewhere.

#### POSTAL CLERKS QUIT—SAY PAY IS TOO SMALL.

SAN FRANCISCO.

Between 500 and 600 men have resigned from Postal Service in California, Utah, Nevada, and Arizona in the last few months, attributing action to alleged disorganization and inadequate pay in the Post Office Department.

They say pay of mail clerks does not approach the cost of living.

#### SPECIAL BOYS QUIT.

[By United Press.]

SEATTLE.

The entire special-delivery force of mail carriers here will quit December 31 to work in the shipyards where they will receive higher wages.

Postmaster Battle has advertised for boys with motorcycles or bicycles to take their places, stating that the Government will pay \$50 a month.

#### POST-OFFICE SALARIES.

To THE EDITOR: During these days the Toledo post office is furnishing further evidence of the retrogression of the mail service under Postmaster General Burleson's administration. Uncle Sam has entered the ranks of the employers of child labor by hiring a swarm of schoolboys, ranging from 13 to 17 years, to meet the expected holiday rush.

Low wages are no inducement to competent help and the reserve list has long been exhausted. The faithful old employees, with periods of from 10 to 25 years' service, receive only 5 cents an hour more than boys in knee trousers.

The Postal System is one of the most necessary adjuncts for the successful completion of the war. Why should our aims be jeopardized by the employment of child labor? Important military correspondence, questionnaires, and such mail matter upon which hang the lives of many of our citizens are subject to the incompetent handling of mere boys not yet out of school.

Something should be done, and were the American public cognizant of the conditions in the Postal System there would be an upheaval in the department.

PRESS COMMITTEE.

*Post Office Clerks Union 170.*

A logical argument for the Nolan bill is found in a report from the House Post Office Committee, in which this statement in regard to the substitute service and meager entrance wage is made:

"The fact that these employees serve an apprenticeship as substitutes for an average period of four years at an approximate wage of \$35 per month, or \$420 per annum, during their period of substitution. When they receive a regular appointment they start in at an annual salary of \$800, and if they render satisfactory service they must serve five years in regular employment before they reach the \$1,200 grade, or a total of nine years from the time that they enter the service. During the nine years these employees average \$742.22 per annum. Their work is not only hard and laborious, but it requires men of exceptional ability and character to perform the duties in the efficient manner required of employees by the rules of the Post Office Department."

From the same authoritative source we learn that the entrance wage into the Postal Service—the largest governmental agency—is the lowest paid to any class of Government employees above the grade of laborer. This report reads:

"The present salary of \$800 for these clerks and carriers after receiving permanent appointment is the lowest entrance salary now paid by the Government to any class of employees in the classified service above the grade of

laborer. In view of this fact, and in consideration of the four years that they are required to serve as substitutes before receiving permanent appointments, the proposed entrance salary fixed in this bill at \$1,000 is fair and just. An entrance salary of \$1,000 will make for the efficiency of the service, because of making the service attractive to the right kind of eligibles. Under existing conditions many young men take the examination to enter the Postal Service without fully understanding the actual conditions that will confront them. The result is that thousands who take the examinations and qualify with splendid averages either refuse to be sworn in when called as substitutes or very shortly leave the substitute service after becoming familiar with actual conditions."

While I hesitate to state that the Postmaster General is an advocate of the Nolan bill, knowing as I do his attitude toward his employees' wage agitation, as expressed in his annual report, when he referred to their wage as being three times that of the men in the trenches, yet I am heartened by a subsequent message from him to his employees, dated January 1, 1918, in which he says: "The magnificent achievements of the past year have been obtained by your efforts, and you are entitled to the credit for them."

One of the achievements of the past year to which Mr. Burleson referred, no doubt, was the accumulation of a surplus of \$10,000,000. He admits this was due to the efforts of the employees and wants them to be credited with it. There is no better way of showing credit, I believe, than by permitting the men responsible for this surplus to share it in the way of an increased wage. The Nolan bill insures this. It will enable the poorer paid postal employees to cash in on the credit—to get something substantial—for their magnificent achievements of the past year—achievements for which Mr. Burleson wants them to have due credit.

#### VARIOUS CONSIDERATIONS INDICATING THE NEED FOR INCREASING SALARIES AND WAGES OF FEDERAL EMPLOYEES.

[By Florence Etheridge, fourth vice president National Federation of Federal Employees.]

At one of the hearings on retirement for Federal employees held last summer before the Senate Committee on Civil Service and Retrenchment the chairman of the committee asked me whether among the women employees in the Government service, other than charwomen, there were more than a few whose wage was less than \$720 per annum. I was at the time unable to venture more than an opinion on this subject, but, from percentages since worked out on a basis of figures presented by Bulletin No. 107 of the Bureau of the Census, it appears that over 56 per cent of the women, other than charwomen, in the Federal services in Washington and the field received salaries of less than \$900 per year, as against 5 per cent of men similarly employed. Probably the percentage is considerably lower to-day; but in many offices, notably the Bureau of Engraving and Printing and the money-counting division of the Treasury Department, there are many women receiving not more than \$600 per annum. The Patent Office also has women employees engaged in responsible clerical work and receiving \$720 a year, though the Commissioner of Patents has asked in the current estimates for an increase in the salaries of this grade of employees.

Strange as it may seem, at a time when salaries and wages outside the Government service have been increased more largely than ever before to correspond roughly to the increase in the cost of living—in England the wages of the workers have been increased 40 per cent—at a time when the new appointments to the Government departments are being made at a higher entrance salary than ever before, the permanent employees of these departments are in a more trying position than at any previous period. New employees are appointed in the same offices with those of long experience at higher salaries than those reached by the experienced employees after many years of service, and under the new law advantageous transfers of these experienced employees are practically prohibited. Take my own case as an example: Entering Federal employment 17 years ago at a wage—nominally a salary—of \$600, I have gradually worked up through the grades by virtue of evening work in college and law school to \$1,500. My work in the Indian Office is that of a probate examiner. Stenographers are now being appointed in the War Department at salaries of \$1,000, \$1,100, and \$1,200. Moreover, I can not, except after a very special and somewhat humiliating effort—it is now necessary that the head of the department from which transferred should state that in his opinion the appli-

can for transfer can do better work in the department to which he seeks transfer than in that from which transfer is sought—obtain a transfer to another department, and if transferred can take no advantage of the higher rates of salary now paid, as I must commence at and continue for at least a year at the rate of pay at which I am transferred. I have at hand a letter from a woman employee of the Post Office Department in which she says bitterly but with substantial justice that the situation in which we find ourselves amounts to "being interned for the period of the war."

We appreciate the necessity of adapting ourselves to the exigencies of the war, and we are glad to do so; but we wonder if Members of Congress who voted favorably on sections 6 and 7 of the urgent deficiency bill appreciate what it and the several Executive orders on the same subject have done to us.

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DATA IN SUPPORT OF REQUEST OF GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES FOR INCREASED PAY FOR ALL GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES, SHOWING INCREASED NEED FOR NOLAN BILL (H. R. 152).

[Submitted by the National Federation of Federal Employees, 410 A. F. of L. Building, Washington, D. C.]

An advertisement of the Old Dutch Market appeared in the papers a few days ago showing that since December, 1914, on 61 items of food there has been an increase of more than 86.5 per cent. They estimate that during the last three years the cost of living has advanced about 75 per cent. A copy of the advertisement is herewith.

Page 84 of the December Monthly Review of the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics shows that in the year from October, 1916, to October, 1917, prices of food as a whole advanced 30 per cent. During the period from October, 1913, to October, 1917, food as a whole advanced 52 per cent. These figures cover 30 average cities of the United States, but the advance in prices from October, 1917, to January, 1918, is not shown by this report.

Latest statistics of the Department of Labor are borne out with regard to food and other items of cost of living by Bradstreet's reports. These reports show the cost of living based on a hundred different items has advanced from a ratio figure of 12.08 in December, 1916, to 16.91 in November, 1917, or 32 per cent in 11 months. This is probably the best estimate that can be made of the exact increase in the cost of living.

With regard to wage increases that have been granted, page 122 of the December Monthly Review of the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics shows that the average increase of wages in 13 classes of industries during the year from October, 1916, to October, 1917, was 18.1 per cent, and the December, 1916, Monthly Review shows that between October, 1915, and October, 1916, there was an average increase of 20.2 per cent. Similar reports for every month in the last two years have shown constantly increasing wages. The report of the New York State Department of Labor for November, 1917, shows that wages have increased from a ratio of 100 in August, 1915, to a ratio of 170 in November, 1917, with a ratio of increase in the number of employees from 100 to 120, or nearly 50 per cent increase within the last two and one-half years.

Latest figures on the average pay of Government employees show that the average annual pay is \$948, but it is probably less than this now, because of the great number of employees placed in the service within the last few years at salaries lower than \$900. The salaries now paid to Government employees were fixed by statute in 1854 and have not been generally changed since, except to add to the number of low-paid positions—those receiving less than \$1,200 a year—and the 5 and 10 per cent increases granted by the last Congress for this year only. The United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, in its report of the cost of living in the District of Columbia, shows that \$1,082.80 is the least possible amount on which a family could live decently in 1916. This necessarily means that with an increase of more than 30 per cent since 1916 the majority of Government employees have lowered the standard of living greatly, that they are not living decently, that they are piling up debts which they have not any hope of paying, and that literally thousands of them are working nights and Sundays to make ends meet.

H. M. McLAREN, *President.*



Concerning the pay of Government clerks, the following price list gives some idea of the increased cost of living:

*Comparison of retail prices of 61 items of foods during December, 1914, December, 1915, and December, 1917.*

Foods.	December—			Foods.	December—		
	1914	1915	1917		1914	1915	1917
GROCERIES.				PORK.			
	Cents.	Cents.	Cents.		Cents.	Cents.	Cents.
Bread, 1-pound loaf.....	4	4	7	Fresh hams.....	16	15	32
Sugar, granulated, pound.....	5	6	9½	Fresh shoulders.....	14	12½	30
Flour, Gold Medal, pound.....	4	4	6½	Fresh pork chops, lean.....	16	14	34
Milk, condensed, can.....	10	10	19	Fresh pork chops, loin.....	18	18	38
Milk, evaporated, tall can.....	7½	9	15	Fresh pork roast, lean.....	16	13	32
Milk, evaporated, small can.....	3½	4½	8	Fresh pork roast, center.....	18	16	35
Tomatoes, Std., 2½'s, can.....	7	8	16	Corned shoulders.....	14	12½	26
Corn, Std., 2½'s, can.....	7	7	14	Corned hams.....	16	15	32
Peas, E. J.....	8	7	12	Smoked hams, whole.....	16	15	34
Baked beans, Campbell's.....	9	9	18	Smoked hams, sliced.....	25	26	48
Corn meal, pound.....	3	4	6	Smoked shoulders.....	14	12	27
Hominy, pound.....	3	4	8	Smoked bacon, sliced.....	24	22	44
Rice, best, pound.....	9	8	12	Smoked sausage.....	12½	15	27
Oatmeal, pound.....	5	4	8	Lard, pure, pound.....	12½	11	30
Macaroni and spaghetti, bulk, pound.....	8	8	13	Lard, compound, pound.....	10	10	26
Prunes, small, pound.....	5	5	10	BUTTER, EGGS, ETC.			
Salmon, Red Alaska, can.....	15	15	22	Butterine (oleo).....	22	22	30
Soups, can.....	8	9	12	Butter, first grade, pound.....	37	33	55
Navy beans, best, pound.....	6	8	18	Eggs, dozen.....	32	28	42
Lima beans, dried, pound.....	8	8	22	Cheese (cream).....	20	22	32
Catsup, bottle.....	9	9	12	VEGETABLES.			
Sirup, can.....	10	10	15	Potatoes, peck.....	15	23	38
Corn flakes (Quaker), package.....	5	7	8	Kale, peck.....	10	12	40
Split peas, pound.....	5	8	16	Spinach, peck.....	15	15	70
Scotch peas, pound.....	6	7	12	Onions, yellow, pound.....	2	2	4
Black-eye peas, pound.....	4	6	13	Lettuce, head.....	5	5	10
BEEF.				Sweet potatoes, peck.....	35	17	80
Rib roast, pound.....	18	18	27	Cabbage, new, pound.....	½	1	4
Chuck roast.....	16	14	24	Total units.....	770	891	1,434
Plate (soup meat).....	12	12½	18				
Porterhouse steak, pound.....	24	24	35				
Sirloin steak, pound.....	22	22	32				
Round steak, pound.....	20	18	32				
Chuck steak, pound.....	18	14	24				
Hamburg steak, pound.....	14	12½	22				
Beef liver.....	8	8	18				

Per cent.

Average increase on all items shown on this list from December, 1914, to December, 1917.....	86.5
Average increase on all items shown on this list from December, 1915, to December, 1917.....	61.1

About one-half (or 50 per cent) of the pay check is spent for food, which has advanced 86½ per cent in 3 years.

Assuming that all other items in the family budget have remained stationary in price, it would require pay increase of 43 per cent to break even, as against the cost of living in 1914.

What has happened to the cost of coal, shoes, clothing, and about everything else is only too well known.

Conservatively figured, the cost of living has advanced in the past 3 years about 75 per cent.

Were it not for the wise and energetic work of the United States Food Administration many of these prices would now be very much higher than they are. This is particularly true of flour, bread, sugar, and all canned goods.

**STATEMENT OF MR. FRANK A. BUSH, OF THE CUSTODIAN SERVICE,  
REPRESENTING FEDERAL EMPLOYEES' UNION NO. 21, BALTI-  
MORE, MD., RELATIVE TO NOLAN BILL.**

Mr. Chairman and gentlemen of the committee, I can say but very little more than has been said by those that have preceded me.

Baltimore, Md., where I reside, has always been a cheap city to live in. The rents were low, with good markets where produce and other necessities of life were cheap. But that is past. The high cost of living has come to Baltimore like all other cities of the United States, which make it hard on the Federal employee, as his salary has remained the same while outside firms raised their wages to meet the increased cost of living.

To make sure that the Government employee should stay in bondage and not be allowed to better his condition, there has been a rule made that he must be out of the Government service three months before he can take an examination for a higher position. The same ruling applies to all firms manufacturing war supplies.

There are vacancies in the service now which can not be filled, as no one wants a Government job at the salaries now paid.

Now, as the Government wants the best there is, an applicant must take a physical as well as a mental examination. He must possess more than the average amount of strength, skill, and education or the Government does not want his services. Therefore, as they require the best, they should pay commensurate wages or at least living ones.

I respectfully submit the following as the salary and expenditures of a laborer in the custodian force:

His salary is \$60.50 per month, including the present 10 per cent increase.

Board for himself, wife, and child	\$30.00
Rent	10.00
Fuel	12.32
Insurance and societies	4.70
Clothing for three	20.00
Car fare and church fund	5.00
Total expenditures	\$2.02

After finishing his work for the Government he must do outside work in order to make up the deficiency. He is a janitor of a church and gets \$12 per month, his wife makes \$10 per month, and after paying their obligations they can not save a cent—and live from hand to mouth most of the time. This allows no provision for sickness or diversions of any kind. If he should become ill his family would be left helpless, as he can not provide for a rainy day.

LAUNDRY WORKERS' UNION, BUREAU OF ENGRAVING AND PRINTING,  
Washington, D. C., January 3, 1918.

HON. J. P. MAHER,

*Chairman of Labor Committee, House of Representatives.*

DEAR SIR: The above-named union desires to have a representative, but could not, for fear of embarrassing the work in the bureau. Kindly see brief inclosed and have same inserted in the record at the hearings.

Respectfully,

JOHN GERMAN, *Vice President.*

LAUNDRY WORKERS' UNION, LOCAL No. 110,

BUREAU OF ENGRAVING AND PRINTING,

Washington, D. C., January 4, 1918.

*To the Labor Committee, House of Representatives, Washington, D. C.:*

GENTLEMEN: The Laundry Workers' Union, Local 110, of Bureau of Engraving and Printing, beg to submit, for your consideration, the following:

There are employed in the laundry at the bureau 91 men who receive the pittance of \$2.11 per diem. Eighty per cent of these men are men of families ranging from two to nine, and the lives of the men in this particular branch are ever in jeopardy because of the nonsanitary conditions, breaking belts, rotating machinery, bursting steam pipes, etc. The records of the bureau will show that 60 per cent of these men have sacrificed their pittance to buy a liberty bond, endeavoring to be loyal to their Government and country. We have appealed for an increase, but in vain. To say the least, our suffering is intense, and we owe urgent bills that we wish to but can not pay, and thereby we are charged as being dishonest. We heartily indorse the Nolan \$3-per-day-minimum-wage bill and pray that you will give it your cooperation for its immediate passage.

Fraternally, yours,

JOHN GERMAN, *Vice President.*

CHAS. H. KERR.

JOSEPH BROOKS.

*Statement of one who receives \$2.11 per diem with four in family.*

Months carrying 25 days	\$52. 75
Months carrying 26 days	54. 86
Months carrying 27 days	56. 97
Per annum	660. 43

## Disbursements:

4-room house per month	16. 50
Fuel	8. 00
Food	28. 25

*What one could live on per annum with four in family.*

House rent	\$240
Food	536
Wearing apparel	80
Charity	30
Car fare	12
Fuel	50
Total	948

Respectfully,

JOHN GERMAN.

CHARLES H. KERR.

JOSEPH BROOKS.

## A FEW LETTERS IN FAVOR OF THE BILL.

WASHINGTON, D. C., December 31, 1917.

Hon. Mr. NOLAN:

The inclosed article has been read very carefully, and therefore beg of you to look after those Government employees who are working not as clerks but as called by the civil service classified messengers. I know personally many young men who came here before me who have started as messengers at \$720 and it is five months that they are here without getting a raise. I am only four months and have received two raises, which brought my salary up to \$1,200.

If a clerk is starving on \$1,200, what in the world are these messengers doing? They don't live, but at that salary they are existing. Why shouldn't a messenger have a chance to advance? I think that the salary I am making is very

nice, and can and do live very well. I defy anyone to say otherwise. For God's sake, help others. I am a citizen of your State and want you to fight them as hard as possible for their sake of a raise and a chance to advance to a higher position.

I am, your obedient servant,

A CITIZEN OF YOUR STATE.

JANUARY 10, 1918.

HON. JOHN I. NOLAN, M. C.,  
*Washington, D. C.:*

We, the undersigned messengers at Army headquarters, San Francisco, who are civil-service employees, beg favorable action on the Nolan bill. Maximum annual salary now paid, \$840; minimum, \$720, which is entirely inadequate to provide our children with ordinary food and clothing or to educate them.

DANIEL S. LOONEY.  
THOS. S. HUGHES.  
W. A. PLUMB.  
SAMUEL W. WILKINSON.  
JAMES M. WADE.  
GEORGE A. WESTPHALINGER.  
JOHN E. O'CONNELL.  
HENRY D. FOULK.

LOUIS RICHTER.  
FREDERICK STANLEY.  
W. S. MCCLURE.  
C. J. EDWARDS.  
PETER HELLMAN.  
JULIAN C. NISSEN.  
MICHAEL KEATING.  
WM. M. WHITE.

(Personal.)

WASHINGTON, D. C., *January 12, 1918.*

MY DEAR SIR: I take the liberty to write you for the purpose of congratulating you upon the bill you expect to put through Congress relative to the Government workers.

Don't you think it far better to amend your bill so as to increase the salaries of Government workers who have finished their probation period of six months rather than let us who have not been in the Government service two years starve to death in the meanwhile?

When appointed through civil-service rules an appointee is given six months to make good in. at the expiration of said time, of worthy, is given a permanent appointment. Your bill to increase salaries to all who have been in the Government service two years is an injustice to we that have passed the six months' probation period, and I am sure that if you will consider with me that you will amend your bill so as to include all those who have served their probation period of six months.

Thanking you so much for your faithful service to us,

I am, very truly, yours,

A \$60 SKILLED LABORER.

HON. JOHN I. NOLAN, M. C.,  
*House of Representatives, City.*

525 SIXTH AVENUE, NEW BRIGHTON, PA.,  
*January 1, 1918.*

HON. JOHN I. NOLAN:

Mr. Nolan, how about the minimum-wage bill? Are you going to try to have it passed at this session, or are you going to let it drop? I was hoping you would get it passed, as it would help us low-paid fellows, as our wage is so low that a per cent bill don't amount to much to us.

Thank you for what you have done for us. Hoping to hear favorably from you.

JAMES E. HOUK.



**Gaylord Bros.**  
**Makers**  
**Syracuse, N. Y.**  
PAT. JAN. 21, 1908



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